

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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R 272245Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0303

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

USUN 0011

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0149

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PP

SUBJ: TRANSFER OF AUSTRALIAN POWERS TO PAPUA

NEW GUINEA

1. GOA HAS TRANSFERRED JUDICIAL POWERS PREVIOUSLY RESERVED TO AUSTRALIA TO GPNG AND THE TRANSFER WILL BE FORMALLY MARKED IN A CEREMONY ON FEBRUARY 17.

2. GOA WILL TRANSFER DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS POWERS NOW RESERVED TO AUSTRALIA TO GPNG ON MARCH 6.

3. HOLLOWAY, COUNSELOR OF AUSTRALIAN OFFICE SAYS THAT THIS MEANS TURNING OVER LAST REMAINING VESTIGES OF OPERATING FUNCTIONS. SOME AUSTRALIANS WILL CONTINUE TO WORK IN HIGH LEVEL POSITIONS. BRIGADIER NORRIE, FOR EXAMPLE, WILL CONTINUE TO HEAD THE PNG DEFENCE FORCE FOR AN UNDECIDED PERIOD OF TIME. OTHER SOURCES REPORT THAT BILL CONROY WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE AS SECRETARY DFRT UNTIL JUNE WHEN TONY SIAGURA WILL TAKE OVER. ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE WHO RECENTLY WAS GIVEN PERMANENT STATUS IS AUSTRALIAN.

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4. HOLLOWAY SAID THAT THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY ON THESE

FUNCTIONS WILL REMAIN WITH THE GOVERNOR GENERAL IN AUSTRALIA WHO WILL INSTRUCT THE HIGH COMMISSIONER IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO ACCEPT THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GPNG ON ALL MATTERS REGARDING JUSTICE, DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNLESS THEY CONTRAVENED AUSTRALIAN OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL TREATIES.

5. HOLLOWAY SAID THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE MOVES WAS QUITE LIMITED BECAUSE THE GPNG HAS BEEN RUNNING THE SHOW FOR MONTHS.

6. GPNG IS STILL TALKING ABOUT JUNE 30 AS INDEPENDENCE DAY BUT HOLLOWAY DOUBTS THAT THIS IS POSSIBLE. HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE TO APPROVE CONSTITUTION BILL AND ORGANIC LAWS IN APRIL SESSION TO MAKE JUNE 30 THE DATE, AND THIS IS UNLIKELY. AUSTRALIANS THINK SEPTEMBER MOST LIKELY BUT DECEMBER POSSIBLE.

7. SOMARE NOW HAS HIS EYES FIXED ON THE ELECTION OF JUNE, 1976 IN CONSIDERING INDEPENDENCE DAY. HOLLOWAY SAID SOMARE WANTS AROUND A HALF YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE BEFORE THE ELECTION, BUT NOT A PERIOD LONG ENOUGH TO PERMIT THINGS TO GO WRONG FOR WHICH SOMARE AND THE PANGU PARTY COULD BE BLAMED.

8. COMMENT: SUCCESSIVE STEPS IN THE TRANSFER OF POWER, ACCOMPANIED BY PUBLICITY AND FORMAL CEREMONIES, PROVIDE A CONTINUING REMINDER THAT INDEPENDENCE IS COMING CLOSER.
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